2009 UNIVERSITY TEACHING AWARDS

Christopher Armitage stands at the net at Carolina’s tennis courts. “Eons ago,” he said, “I captained my college team, and I still enjoy competing with students, most of whom diplomatically allow me to win.”

Christopher Armitage
Bowman and Gordon Gray Professor of English; adjunct professor of peace, war and defense

FACULTY MEMBER 1967

CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Shakespeare; Canadian Literature; 17th-century Literature; Shakespeare, Ibsen and Shaw in Performance in England

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY In seeking to inspire students, the teacher’s being inspired by his or her subject is a desirable prerequisite. I’m fortunate in having English, American and Canadian literature as my subject and in having acquired degrees in England, Canada and the United States. This experience convinced me of the consciousness-widening value of studying abroad, so I began in 1970 taking UNC students and alumni on Study Abroad programs, recently in the form of the Honors Summer Program in London and Oxford.

EXCERPTS FROM AWARD CITATION “To this day I believe that the War Literature course was the best course I ever took in school and that Dr. Armitage was the best professor I ever had. Because of Dr. Armitage, I am a better writer, reader, thinker, and attorney. … If anyone deserves a lifetime achievement award, it is this professor whose positive influence has remained with this former student throughout a lifetime.”

— Donna LeFebvre, chair, 2009 University Teaching Awards Committee

Nominations open for 2010 University Teaching Awards

Which of your professors or teaching assistants have piqued your curiosity, opened your mind to new ideas or influenced your choice of career?

The University’s annual effort to identify and reward exceptional teaching is under way. The University Committee on Teaching Awards encourages students, faculty, staff and alumni to submit nominations for several campuswide awards.

Nominations may be made at any time, but the deadline for nominations is Oct. 1. For complete information about the awards, refer to provost.unc.edu/teaching-awards.

Chair of the 2010 committee is Joe Lowman, professor of psychology (jclowman@email.unc.edu or 962-3993). Debbie Stevenson, executive assistant to the provost, can also assist you with more information. She can be reached at 962-7882 or debbie_stevenson@unc.edu.

Winners will be recognized at a basketball game in early 2010 and will receive awards at the annual banquet in April.
The awards were created in 1952 with a bequest by the children of Lola Spencer and Simpson Bobo Tanner in memory of their parents. The award recognizes excellence in inspirational teaching of undergraduate students, particularly first- and second-year students.

JAN BARDSTLEY
Associate professor, incoming chair of Asian Studies
FACULTY MEMBER 1994
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR The American Life of Japanese Women, Japanese Theater, Geisha in History, Fiction and Fantasy
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY I use a variety of means to approach the course topic — class debates, fiction and critical texts, film clips — all offer a different way in to discussion. I make use of the wealth of resources at Carolina: Incorporating visual materials provokes thought in different ways, and the Ackland Art Museum curators are always happy to arrange tours that work with my students’ interests. Librarians at Davis Library and the Rare Book Collection show students and me how to find all kinds of sources for research projects. The Center for Faculty Excellence offers all kinds of ways to improve one’s teaching and I have long taken advantage of their handouts, seminars, and consultation.
EXCERPTS FROM AWARD CITATION “... I relished every classroom discussion, as Professor Bardsley brought out the best in me, as well as my classmates.” When asked what could be improved in this course, one student said, “I honestly can’t think of anything... I love this class!”

ADAM PRINSTEIN
Assistant professor of organizational behavior, Kenan-Flagler Business School
FACULTY MEMBER 2007
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Organizational Behavior (undergraduate), Negotiations (MBA), Individual Behavior (Ph.D.)
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY I seek to make a difference in students’ lives. After extraordinary professors changed my life, I knew that I would dedicate my career to carrying forward their legacy of inspiring students. Since I believe that the most memorable way to learn a concept is to use it, I strive to engage students in experiential learning activities. As a strong believer in the power of surprise, I frequently bring counterintuitive research evidence and unexpected personal stories into the classroom.
EXCERPTS FROM AWARD CITATION “... I did not really know that such a level of inspirational teaching was even possible,” one student wrote. Through stories of Grant’s ability to connect with hopeful students and their search for a meaningful career and life, it is obvious that he has made and will continue to make an impact in the lives of his students. ... Grant’s end-of-course evaluations consistently hover around 4.9 on a scale of 5.0. Students stop by his office hours just to have discussions about their lives. And in the classroom, students stay engaged and attentive in ways they never thought possible in lectures at UNC.”

 MITCH PRINSTEIN
Professor and director of clinical psychology
FACULTY MEMBER 2004
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Psychology 512 (Popularity, Friendship and Peer Relations); Psychology 395
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY My primary teaching goal is to promote enthusiasm for psychological science. I’d like for students to learn about past theories in research in developmental psychopathology, but perhaps more so, I’d like students to feel empowered to ask and answer their own questions in psychology, to think critically about what they read in professional and popular literatures, and to be motivated to learn more about psychology in the future.
EXCERPTS FROM AWARD CITATION “... I have never had a professor who cares so much about their students’ progress.” ... Many students note that after his courses they become motivated to pursue psychology as a career and start volunteering more to gain first-hand experience. One student remarked, “His positive personality, high energy, exceptionally interesting research and innovative teaching methods each contributed to my desire to becoming a psychologist.” Another student commented that “It is difficult to imagine that someone so actively engaged in research could also so genuinely be concerned about his students.”

ARREL TOEWS
Professor of biochemistry and biophysics
FACULTY MEMBER 1977
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Introduction to Biochemistry (two-semester series of lecture and lab courses); Biochemistry for Summer Medical Education Development Program in School of Medicine; and lecture in the Molecules to Cells block of instruction for first-year medical students.
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY Biochemistry and chemistry are complex and often dreary subjects for many undergraduates, so I try to make my lectures interesting and relevant by relating the topics to the world around them, to ancient history, art, and literature, and to light-hearted aspects of life, without compromising the integrity and rigor of the subjects I teach. My goal is not to make biochemists out of my students, but rather to mold them into perpetual students on a continuous lifelong quest for new knowledge. To be sure they know how much I care about them, I always give my students a little [Hershey’s] Kiss on Valentine’s Day (my TAs get one too, of course!).
EXCERPTS FROM AWARD CITATION “... ‘I’ve learned more in this college course than any other (and I’m a junior) and I am so glad I took it, even though it doesn’t apply toward my major.’ ... Such an expression of Professor Toews’ class as being the best at UNC is not uncommon for this excellent professor. ... ‘It’s because of teachers like you, the few who believed in me when it didn’t look as though I could make it, that I want to teach.’”

GERALD UNKS
Professor of education
FACULTY MEMBER 1967
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Two sections, The School in American Society, Honors Seminar in Education
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY A good teacher instructs us in realities and suggests dreams. — Gerald Unks
William C. Friday/Class of 1986 Award for Excellence in Teaching

ELEONORA MAGOMEDOVA
Lecturer, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures  
- FACULTY MEMBER 1988  
- CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR: First, Fourth and Fifth Year Russian; Introduction into Russian Literature; and a Seminar on Teaching Methods  
- TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: My teaching is a form of theater — drama in search for new knowledge, comedy of little funny mistakes we all make while learning a new language, and the tragedy of an occasional poor result on an exam. My students are as much actors in that joint performance as I myself am, each lesson is the rehearsal in anticipation of the grand opening of the performance on a real stage.  
- EXCERPTS FROM AWARD CITATION: “... Passion and enthusiasm. These two words appear over and over again among the student comments on [her] teaching evaluations. Even though many students find Russian to be one of the most difficult languages to learn, her students consistently celebrate her ability to cultivate their Russian language skills by creating a safe, supportive and fun learning environment.”

MAGOMEDOVA

The award was created by members of the 1986 graduating class to recognize faculty who have exemplified excellence in inspirational teaching. It is named in honor of William C. Friday, who devoted a lifetime of service to the University as president of the UNC System.

Distinguished Teaching Awards for Post-Baccalaureate Teaching and Mentoring

KENNETH BOLLEN  
H.R. Immerwahr Distinguished Professor of Sociology  
- FACULTY MEMBER 1985  
- CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR: Data Analysis in Social Research, Structural Equations with Latent Variables  
- TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: One challenge of teaching is remembering what it was like when you were first exposed to a course topic. What questions did you have? What concepts were hard to grasp and what analogies helped to explain them? In my teaching I try to put myself in the student’s place and to explain ideas in a way that I might have found helpful when I first learned about them. This combined with a mixture of rigorous theory and applications has worked well for me.  
- EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION: “... He is described as providing ‘tireless one-on-one help’ and as ‘devoted’ to teaching. His students describe him as approachable, respectful and having a good sense of humor with ‘a perfect demeanor for teaching,’ and ‘mesmerizing’ and ‘breath-taking’ in the classroom.”

BOLLEN

WILLIAM C. MILLER  
Associate professor, Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine and Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health  
- FACULTY MEMBER 1997  
- CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR: Clinical Measurement and Evaluation, Seminar in Clinical Research, Clinical Epidemiology and Clinical Research Methods, Clinical Research Skills  
- TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: Translate, challenge, instill. Translate: I try to convey epidemiological and statistical concepts in accessible language that all of my students will understand. Challenge: I push my students to think, rather than regurgitate, and to express those thoughts clearly and concisely. Their future success depends on developing and communicating their ideas. Instill: I attempt to foster my students’ confidence in their own abilities to ensure that they continue to learn and challenge themselves throughout their careers.  
- EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION: “... Miller epitomizes the ideal mentor, described by one student as ‘offering invaluable guidance in my grad school course selection, dissertation and other research in a way that helps me to think through issues on my own.’ He is ‘motivated by genuine concern for his students,’ ‘every piece of wisdom is clear, well-articulated, and critical for ah-ha moments.’

MILLER

RANDALL HENDRICK  
Professor and chair, Department of Linguistics  
- FACULTY MEMBER 1979  
- CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR: Syntactic Theory I, Syntax, History and Philosophy of Linguistics, Topics in Linguistics  
- TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: I do not have an overarching philosophy, but I do move forward pragmatically. I try to improve a course each time I teach it by focusing on a specific aspect of the course for special attention, and I like to “try on” strategies and techniques from colleagues. Taking classes has helped me to think about being a student and how unique each student’s needs are. I also marvel at how often and quickly roles can shift and teachers learn from students.  
- EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION: “... His reputation among students in linguistics is one of excellence and supportiveness.” ... “He had a real knack for guiding me toward the answer/epiphany I needed to get to, but letting me get to the answer on my own in the end. I think it takes a great teacher to help enough to get the student on the right track, without just telling the answers. I always felt smart when I left his office!”

HENDRICK

DAVID PENN  
Professor of psychology; associate director of clinical training  
- FACULTY MEMBER 1999  
- CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR: Psychology 101, Graduate Adult Psychopathology  
- TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: My teaching philosophy for mentoring graduate students is comprised of the following principles: 1) Select outstanding graduate students. 2) Treat every encounter with them as a potential learning experience. 3) Identify their strengths, cultivate their passions and help them to address their weaknesses. 4) Don’t be afraid to give feedback (positive or negative). 5) Show them that you care about them as people, not just as students in your laboratory.  
- EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION: “... Penn has mastered a challenging dimension of mentoring as he ‘challenges his students without them feeling defeated.’ Because of his skill and commitment, ‘students are willing to receive the tough love he sometimes delivers ... as he pushes students who are languishing, firmly critiques substandard work and honestly expresses disappointment and concern.’ Another wrote that he has the ‘ability to give feedback delicately and effectively.’

PENN

KEITH SIMMONS  
Professor of philosophy

SIMMONS

This award was first given by the University in 1995 to recognize the important role of post-baccalaureate teaching.
Johnston Teaching Excellence Awards

The awards were created in 1991 to recognize excellence in undergraduate teaching. The awards are funded by the James M. Johnston Scholarship Program.

Daniel Botsman

Associate professor of history
FACULTY MEMBER 2006
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Japan’s Modern Revolution, Tokugawa Japan, Gender and Japanese History, Graduate Research and Writing Seminar
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY One of my main goals in teaching Carolina students about Japanese history is to open their minds to the experiences of people who lived beyond the European and Atlantic worlds, which inevitably tend to dominate their outlooks and educations. At the same time, I try to ensure that the process of studying a society and history that is so often assumed to be fundamentally different from our own is not intimidating and provides students with an opportunity to think through issues that are deeply relevant to their own lives — gender relations, the impact of war, the meanings of modernity, the power of commerce, the legacies of imperialism, the nature of discrimination.
EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION “... One student said, ‘Lectures were awesome; I only wish they were taped so I could watch some again.’... ‘His students’ rave reviews often describe him as accessible, approachable and friendly.’”

Lorraine Cramer

Lecturer in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology
FACULTY MEMBER 2001
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Medical Microbiology, Elementary Pathogenic Microbiology and Introduction to Immunology
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY My favorite instructor, Dr. Andrew Mehall, inspired me not only to want to teach at the college level but also to strive to make education exciting. Dr. Mehall became a sperm in pursuit of an egg, or a neuron firing to signal a nervous impulse. He made learning come alive with humor and wit. I try to live up to his standards. Additionally, it is easy to teach the world’s best students. My students have an earnestness and eagerness that makes teaching them rewarding in itself.
EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION “... ‘Her use of metaphors of pop culture and molecular objects brought material to life. This method helped all students grasp the intricate and detailed processes of microbiology.’... ‘She truly cares about her students’ understanding of the material and is very approachable.’... Students describe her class as a ‘life-changing learning experience.’”

J. Carlyle Sitterson Freshman Teaching Award

Tyler Curtain

Associate professor of English and comparative literature
FACULTY MEMBER 1999
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Horror Literature, Literary Theory, Science Fiction
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY I’m a Socratic teacher. I tend to ask questions and then work through the problem or text at hand by thinking through the logic of a range of possible answers. The questions that I ask are real rather than staged. I am genuinely interested in the solutions that folks come up with, whether in a first year seminar or a graduate class. I love to teach films or texts that I haven’t read or watched before. What is more exciting than discovering something new and interesting with the help of a bunch of very smart people? It’s thrilling. The classroom is simply thrilling.
EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION “… Curtain has a particular gift for engaging young students in imaginatively conceived courses that challenge their preconceptions and previously unquestioned values. ... His ability to motivate his students to think seriously and pursue intellectual goals with confidence extends beyond the classroom.”

This award was created in 1998 by the family of the late J. Carlyle Sitterson to recognize excellence in freshman teaching by a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Mentor Award for Lifetime Achievement

Carol E. Malloy

Associate professor of mathematics education, School of Education
FACULTY MEMBER 1995
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Professional Seminar in Education, Topics in Geometry, Methods and Materials for Teaching Secondary Subjects 1 & 2 (Mathematics), Practica Internship (Mathematics)
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY Mentoring undergraduate and graduate students must be accomplished with enthusiasm, care, and concern. It requires having the capacity to give and receive inspiration. Important facets of mentoring are listening, encouraging, and providing the necessary support to enable students to achieve their personal and professional goals, but the most important part of mentoring is the relationship and bond that is developed between the student and mentor. This bond is a friendship that lasts a lifetime.
EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION “… She is someone who not only walks her talk but helps others find their stride.’... ‘What is even more impressive to consider is that while serving as a mentor to me, she provided the same sort of support to other doctoral students.’... Her influence is only superseded by that of my parents. Ten years later she is still a huge influence in my life.’

This award, created in 1997, acknowledges a lifetime of contributions to a broad range of teaching and learning, particularly mentoring beyond the classroom.

TANNER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING BY GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

In 1990, the University expanded the purview of the Tanner Awards to recognize excellence in the teaching of undergraduates by graduate teaching assistants.

2009 winners were:
JASON BOWERS Department of Philosophy
ANDREW L. GEORGE Department of Environmental Studies
BETH LATSHAW Department of Sociology
JENNIFER MEASE Department of Communication Studies
JASON STAPLES Department of Religious Studies

POST-BACCALAUREATE from page 3

FACULTY MEMBER 1987
CLASSES TAUGHT LAST YEAR Graduate Seminar in Modal Logic; Philosophy 455, a course in advanced logic; Philosophy 855, a graduate seminar on theories of truth
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY Philosophy is driven by deep puzzles and paradoxes, and my initial aim is to get students to really feel the grip of these problems, whether in ethics, metaphysics or logic. Then it’s natural to develop the distinctive analytical and conceptual tools that are needed to address these problems. Philosophy is an activity, and once students feel the problems, and have the tools to tackle them, I encourage them to think the problems through for themselves.
EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION “… He is lauded by colleagues who observed him in the classroom, a ‘truly superb’ teacher. His students observe his ‘genuine love of teaching,’ his ‘kind, respectful and encouraging manner,’ and a ‘truly amazing ability to explain even the most complicated stuff to students unfamiliar with a particular topic.’ ... ‘Extremely few teachers ... match Simmons’ intense and sincere dedication.’”